

**Public Policy Committee  
Minutes  
Meeting of 8 December 2016**

**Attendees:** Rudy Oswald, Stephanie Edelstein, Jerry Morenoff, Chuck Kauffman, Jack Sprague, Mort Faller, Isabelle Schoenfeld, Odile Brunetto, John Honig

Rudy Oswald called the meeting to order.

He mentioned Bill 42-16 which provides 5-year property tax relief for citizens over 65 who have lived in their homes 40 years or more, or are retired members of the Armed Forces. But the bill sets a maximum property level of \$500,000. The Commission testified to urge that the maximum property level be raised to \$700,000. In addition Rudy sent an email to Council Member Navarro requesting this change, and suggested that other PPC members might want to do the same. Such a change may allow more seniors to age in place.

Rudy also mentioned that the Council passed the Renters' Protection Bill (19-15) unanimously.

He also mentioned that the annual USM session with the legislator in Annapolis is scheduled for January 25, 2017. Buses will leave from Gaithersburg per AARP who is organizing the travel.

**Priorities for legislation.** The list of Commission Priorities for the FY18 budget, as submitted in a letter to Council Chairman Mr. Leventhal, dated October 11, was discussed for the purpose of selecting the 3 top budget priorities as requested by the COA chair to respond to OMB inquiry. All Commission members present agreed that the Affordable Housing, Rights and Protections and Senior Homelessness needs are the top priority. No cost estimates were available for this request. Thereafter,

1. Adult Protection Services (\$229,436) and Public Guardianship (\$76,225)
2. Adult Foster Care payment rates (@153,180) and Adult Foster Care Escorted Transportation (\$38,000)
3. Senior Nutrition Program (\$39,000)
4. Senior Center Plus (150,000)

Were selected. Odile pointed out that the multiple items listed in 1 and in 2, each are included in a single budget item and can be counted as groups. A vote on whether to include 3 or 4 items in the Committee's preferences ended in a 3:3 vote tie.

**Robert Hill**, Assistant State's Attorney, was the Committee's guest and discussed 5 recommendations for the next legislative session that were submitted by Davis Kelly on November 7. . The recommendations would bring the adult protection laws below into conformity with child protection.

Recommendation 1: Amend the Statutory Definition of Vulnerable Adult

Recommendation 2: Amend Family Law Article 5-801

Recommendation 3: Amend Criminal Procedure Article 11-701

Recommendation 4: Amend Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article 11-304

Recommendation 5: Amends Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article 10-402

There was a discussion about the definition of the terms “undue influence” (which can be very subjective, and therefore problematic to enforce) and “vulnerable adult.” In his bill last year, Delegate Kramer defined vulnerable seniors as a person over the age of 68. However, the amendments sought to the statutes above would also apply to younger adults eg with disabilities, so the 68 threshold would not be appropriate.. Mr. Hill said that the state’s attorneys office is researching other states’ definitions of vulnerable adult.

The PPC discussed Delegate Korman’s proposal, still in the drafting stage. The “Nursing Facility and Assisted Living Program Transparency Act” would require nursing homes and assisted living facilities to post their contracts on their websites. It was considered by the Committee to be a good idea. The PPC endorsed the concept behind this bill and will present it to the full Commission.

Rudy reported that there has been no activity on the Transportation Fund created through the Uber and Lyft.25/ride surcharge. The Commission on Persons with Disabilities and the COA asked that the fund be used to add more accessible taxis. MC DOT hasn’t yet provided their recommendations for regulations on the use of the funds and so far the funds haven’t been used.

The state FMLA bill that mirrored the Montgomery County law and that the Commission supported died in committee last year. It will likely come up again. Governor Hogan just proposed a bill that would be more restrictive.

The Legislative Breakfast was a success, although there were fewer legislators there than expected. This was probably due in part to the county council priorities hearing that ran late the night before.

John Honig